

to the House the bill (H.R. 1834) entitled "To advance policy priorities that will break the gridlock."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resolution was agreed to. There was no objection.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RUSSIAN AIR ATTACK ON KYIV

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to speak of a grave act that took place last week in the capital of Ukraine, Kyiv. The Putin dictatorship continues its illegal war with a double crime—a double-tap strike attack.

A double tap is a merciless attack when a target is struck, but then struck again within minutes in an attempt to kill survivors and first responders. I repeat: A double tap is a war crime.

Sadly, dictator Vladimir Putin's criminality against a free nation is nothing new, and Ukraine has repeatedly seen double-tap strikes specifically targeting first responders over the past 4 years, with over 500 killed.

Yesterday, 3 days after that attack, Sergiy Smolyak, a 56-year-old responder, was laid to rest. This champion of healing and compassion served as a medic for 25 years and had relocated to Kyiv when Russia invaded his hometown in the southern Kherson region nearly 4 years ago.

A nurse who worked with Smolyak said, before his funeral, that he was very kind, always calm, and even-tempered. He saved so many people.

Mr. Speaker, we must do more to deter illegal Russian aggression, inspire more healers, or innocent Ukrainians will continue to be laid to rest in a nation that longs to be free.

PREVENTING FUTURE RENAMING OF ANY NATIONAL MONUMENT OR MEMORIAL AFTER A SITTING PRESIDENT

(Mrs. McCLAIN DELANEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. McCLAIN DELANEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with words spoken 65 years ago this month by President John F. Kennedy: "Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country."

Sadly, President Trump focuses more on what our country can do for him. We saw this last month when he unlawfully branded the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The Kennedy Center is a national treasure of the arts and a memorial to a fallen President. That is why, in December, I introduced legislation that would remove all Trump signage.

Today, I am proud to announce a third bill. Senator SANDERS and I will

jointly introduce the Stop Executive Renaming for Vanity and Ego (SERVE) Act. The bill will prevent the future renaming of any national monument or memorial after a sitting President.

Trump's branding of our Federal landmarks must end, and we must bring back common sense and an ethos of public service over self.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF BARRY DEL BUONO

(Mr. LICCARDO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LICCARDO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life and contributions of Barry Del Buono, a long-time community leader in San Jose, California, who we lost this last December. With his passing, I lost a childhood hero, and our community lost a champion.

Barry's quiet strength and deep faith propelled a life of extraordinary service for our most vulnerable neighbors. He began his life of public service as a Catholic priest in San Jose, where he cofounded Loaves & Fishes Family Kitchen, a nonprofit that last year provided nearly 2 million meals to families in need.

Barry would eventually leave the priesthood to marry, but his commitment only deepened. In 1980, he founded the Emergency Housing Consortium, now known as HomeFirst, where he pioneered a groundbreaking continuum of care model that extended beyond emergency shelter to include transitional and permanent supportive housing.

Decades later, Barry launched his third act in life in education. He and his dedicated wife, Maile, inspired a new generation of adults with a passion for service through their teaching at San Jose City College and Evergreen Valley College.

Barry was most at home with his family, with Maile, their five children, and seven grandchildren. With grateful hearts, we remember Barry not only for what he built but also for what he believed and what he inspired all of us to believe in and build with him.

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CONGRATULATING MONROE RED JACKETS

(Mr. MORELLE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MORELLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the Monroe Red Jackets high school football team, led by Coach Terrell Cunningham and New York State Gatorade Player of the Year Messiah Hampton, who made history as the first-ever Rochester City School District Class B State champions.

This team showed what is possible when talent meets determination,

when hard work rises above the challenges we face, and when young people refuse to be defined by the obstacles in front of them.

They believed in each other. They believed in themselves. They showed New York State what Rochester pride looks like.

This championship brings hope. It brings hope for the students who have proven their dreams are within reach, for a school that showed excellence thrives here, and for a community that has so much to be proud of.

We thank the players, coaches, families, and fans for reminding us that greatness lives right here in Rochester. I cannot wait to see what all these young people go on to do. We congratulate the Monroe Red Jackets.

CONDEMNING THE JANUARY 6 PARDONS

(Mr. DESAULNIER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my outrage and ask my colleagues to join me in condemning the actions of the President when he pardoned so many of the individuals convicted after January 6.

At least 13 individuals who have been pardoned by President Trump have gone on to commit additional crimes, including sexual assault against a minor and a fatal DUI.

Instead of promoting accountability and rehabilitation, when possible, in our justice system, shouldn't the President and the majority look at these pardons and make sure that they accept the consequences of his actions and their actions by not ignoring them?

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in condemning the President's unvetted and ill-advised pardons that are leading to repeat offenses. Congress should be here to protect innocent Americans and not look away from the consequences of the President's actions.

PROTECTING EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Mrs. HAYES of Connecticut was recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.)

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of the Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Connecticut?

There was no objection.

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to lead this Special Order hour

and to speak about a matter of great importance to millions of American children. With everything going on, it is easy to overlook what is happening at the Department of Education.

Today, I would like to highlight the concerns of parents who have children living with disabilities. They are scared, concerned, and confused.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA, is the Federal law that ensures children with disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education tailored to their unique learning needs.

IDEA provides services to children from birth to age 21. Since its enactment in 1975, IDEA focused on providing children with disabilities the same educational opportunities as all other students. It allows the 7.5 million children living with disabilities who rely on services to receive early intervention and remain in the least restrictive environments alongside their non-disabled peers.

It provides grants and helps parents with their rights and to know what is legally required of schools to develop individualized educational plans, detailing specific goals, services, and support for students.

IDEA requires that teachers be highly qualified with ongoing training, ensuring they meet the unique needs of students with disabilities. These services are there to provide students with postsecondary education, employment, and independent living.

IDEA addresses past failures to educate students with disabilities. I am old enough to remember a time when students with special needs were educated in the basement of schools or outright denied entry. Before IDEA, millions of children with disabilities were denied an education and often refused admission to schools or even programs.

Today, children with disabilities are able to attend any public school and receive services at no cost to their parents. They have legal and civil rights protections for their children under this landmark law.

On March 20, 2025, the President signed an executive order directing the Secretary of Education, Linda McMahon, to facilitate the dismantling of the Department of Education, which raises significant questions about the future of IDEA and the impact on the education of these 7.5 million children.

The students who would be hurt the most by weakening the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act are the children who are the most vulnerable. In nearly every State, public schools are primarily funded by State and local governments with local property taxes playing a crucial role.

Without IDEA and Federal resources, these students could end up in underfunded schools that lack resources, expertise, or accountability to provide the special education services and supports they require.

IDEA is Federal law, which means that even without funding from the De-

partment of Education, State and local districts will have to figure out how they will make up this deficit. They will still have to provide services and likely have to cut other programs.

This could mean a student with dyslexia would no longer receive daily reading interventions. A student who was deaf or hard of hearing would not have a sign language interpreter. A student who just needed a little bit of speech therapy in order to be a part of the class would not have that, making it nearly impossible to follow daily lessons or participate in discussions.

Weakening IDEA would not only cut funding or reduce services, but it would threaten the future of these students who with just the right amount of support and accommodations could thrive.

The stakes are too high. We must protect the Department of Education, and we must protect IDEA. This administration has yet to lay out any detailed plan for the future of IDEA.

I have serious concerns about moving services for students with disabilities to HHS because then they are only being viewed through a medical lens. They would only be diagnosed and would not be seen as students first and given the resources they needed to survive.

Today, I would like to elevate the stories of my colleagues who have children and families living in their district who rely so heavily on the services that the Federal Government provides.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. ADAMS), a member of the Committee on Education and Workforce.

Ms. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. HAYES) for yielding time. I thank her for her unwavering support of children and for having been the National Teacher of the Year. I thank her so much.

Mr. Speaker, I rise because dismantling the Department of Education is not just bad policy. It is dangerous for North Carolina's children. In my State, more than 60 percent of students rely on Pell grants and Federal aid to afford college. Nearly 1.5 million K-12 students depend on title I IDEA school nutrition and other Federal supports.

In Charlotte-Mecklenburg, over 70 percent of students benefit directly from programs administered through the Department. When the Department is gutted, when staff are fired, grants are frozen, and financial aid systems break, it is our most vulnerable young people who feel it first. These are low-income students, first-generation students, students with disabilities, and families who cannot afford disruptions.

This isn't efficiency. It is an educational disarmament. I am proud to defend the Department of Education because protecting the Department means protecting opportunity.

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative ADAMS for her remarks. As she noted, I was a classroom teacher

for over 15 years. I know exactly how important these resources and supports are. I had students who had severe learning disabilities but who were able to thrive with the appropriate accommodations and the resources and support in the classroom.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to note that in my State of Connecticut, in 2025, we received approximately \$160 million from the Federal Government in order to facilitate services for students with exceptionalities. A State like Connecticut would have to fill that gap in order to make sure these students continue to receive services. What is happening with the Department of Education is of grave concern to me.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BYNUM).

Ms. BYNUM. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. HAYES) for bringing us together to stand up for children with disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, if I were to not pay something I owed for 50 years, the consequences would be tremendous. That is exactly what the Federal Government has done with the IDEA, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

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In 1976, just a year after I was born, Congress promised to pay for 40 percent of the cost of public education for children with disabilities. Yet, here we are in 2026. I am 50, almost 51, but the Federal Government is paying less than 12 percent. In my home State of Oregon, that means a \$315 million gap between the funding that our students are getting and the amount that these schools are owed.

On top of that, it has been credibly reported that the Trump administration has started dismantling the Department of Education, including the staff who oversee these IDEA programs. Now the program is both underfunded and there is no one there to send the money out.

That is why earlier this Congress, I introduced the IDEA Full Funding Act. I urge my colleagues to join me in finally giving our students with disabilities exactly what they are owed.

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Oregon for her support.

To the gentlewoman's point, the IDEA has never been fully funded as the Federal Government promised. In the State of Oregon, they received \$162 million in 2025, which is just a fraction of what it costs to educate students with special needs.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. MANNION).

Mr. MANNION. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share what is at stake for students with disabilities as this administration continues its attacks on the Department of Education.

Last year, one of our Nation's most fundamental laws, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA,

reached its 50th anniversary. IDEA opened the doors to opportunities and protected the rights of millions of students with disabilities and their families. It guaranteed a free, appropriate public education where students with disabilities could learn in the least restrictive environment and with the proper support.

Before this landmark piece of legislation, generations of students with disabilities were routinely denied equal access to education. As a teacher for almost 30 years and the founding chairman of the New York State Senate Disabilities Committee, I have seen firsthand how IDEA has transformed lives and what it means to families.

Yet, for all of the progress that we have made, much work still remains, and IDEA is still more at risk today than it has ever been. This administration has recklessly conducted mass layoffs across the Department of Education, with no regard for the impacts on programs, school districts, students, and families whom they serve.

Sadly, these firings have reached the Office of Special Education Programs, which administers IDEA, as well as the Office for Civil Rights, which investigates cases of disability discrimination. Without these agencies and their dedicated employees, parents would have little recourse when schools fail to protect their students and provide appropriate accommodations.

From day one, it was obvious that this administration wanted to transfer IDEA oversight out of the Department of Education entirely by moving it to HHS, an agency with no expertise or legal authority over special education.

Countless disability advocates have sounded the alarm on this proposal. We cannot let these attacks continue, and we must also continue to call out the vile rhetoric and misinformation about disabilities in this country and around the world that this administration has spread.

Parents of students with disabilities fight hard every single day for their children, and there is no reason that they should have to fight harder. I came to Congress to be a voice for those families and to ensure that our country lives up to its promises and our values.

That is why my very first bill was the Protecting Students With Disabilities Act, which would protect IDEA programs from the illegal dismantling of the Department of Education. This should be a bipartisan cause, as it has long been, and we should be talking more about fully funding IDEA and strengthening it. Instead, we are left defending it from political attacks.

I thank my colleague, Representative HAYES, for organizing this discussion. I also thank my fellow members of the Education and Workforce Committee for their commitment to maintaining IDEA. As a fellow educator, I am proud to stand with Representative HAYES in this fight.

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, as our colleague on the committee from Or-

egon makes her way to the podium, I will just read an excerpt from an email that I got from a parent in my district:

As a special needs mom, the current news of the cuts happening in the special education department are frightening to me. I am not well-versed in politics or government, and I don't know how or if this will affect us in Connecticut, but I am my child's only advocate, and I can tell you that our special education system is strained.

Please put yourself in the shoes of a special needs parent who relies on the staff to tell them what happened at school because their child cannot. I ask that you place yourself in the shoes of a parent who cannot afford out-of-pocket services and relies on the public school system to provide speech, occupational, and behavioral services.

Please advocate for my child. I don't even know how to. I need you to do this for them.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI).

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative HAYES for leading this important conversation and bringing her expertise as National Teacher of the Year to the Congress and to the Education Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I have been an education advocate for decades, and I speak with students, parents, and educators in Congress and at home in Oregon, and I can't count the number of times where parents have said to me: Please, please fully fund IDEA.

According to the Department of Education, Secretary McMahon is now exploring additional partnerships to move the administration of special education programs under IDEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, to other Federal agencies. The most likely choice for this unconstitutional and illegal transfer? It is to the Department of Health and Human Services.

Mr. Speaker, this means that Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., would be in charge of administering IDEA. This is the man who disregarded established science to advance policies based on conspiracy theories, including claiming that Tylenol and vaccines cause autism and that autism destroys families.

This agency should not be administering funding or providing guidance to schools on educating students with disabilities, especially with its current Secretary.

IDEA is an education program, not a medical program. It is designed to provide students with disabilities access to a free and appropriate public education, often through individualized education programs, or IEPs.

Those with the expertise and data to best administer the program are already at the Department of Education, or at least they were until Secretary McMahon fired them.

A special education teacher in Beaverton, Oregon, recently wrote to my office. She is extremely concerned, as are so many, about the Trump administration's plans for special education, and this is what she said: "When I tell you that schools are in dire straits already, I mean it—and yet I know it can get worse.

I am terrified for my students. The mass layoffs and restructuring within the Department of Education's Office of Special Education have left only a fraction of the staff to manage billions in IDEA funds and ensure States follow the law."

She continued: "Without Federal oversight, States will have less accountability, fewer resources, and more leeway to deny or reduce services. Families will be left without recourse, and the promise of a free and appropriate public education will be broken."

These are challenging enough times for students, families, and schools. In Portland, the public school district recently redirected an additional \$25 million from their general fund to fill the gap to help provide students with disabilities the resources that they need that State and Federal funding aren't covering, and it is still not enough.

The Trump administration's proposals to disrupt the administration on such an important program risks further harming the people we represent. A mother in Portland wrote to me and said that she is a full-time caregiver, has two sons with disabilities, and that she has only been able to work 2 of the last 8 years because of the lack of reliable care.

Unfortunately, she was just laid off again from her most recent job.

She told me: "We are exhausted and doing everything we can, but the system leaves too much on families."

She begged us to protect access to services for students with disabilities and to continue advocating for these children and their caregivers. In her words: "We need policies that recognize the reality we're living, not ones that make it harder."

These are the families, teachers, and the people who will be affected by decisions we make about IDEA. What we should be doing is fully funding IDEA, not disrupting the support that already exists by forcing schools and families to work with multiple Federal agencies instead of one.

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HHS is not equipped to manage this critical program. I will keep fighting. I will keep fighting the Trump administration's efforts to abandon and dismantle the Department of Education and its core responsibility, especially its core responsibility to students with disabilities.

I thank Representative HAYES for her leadership.

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Ohio, Representative BROWN.

Ms. BROWN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, Congresswoman HAYES, for hosting this Special Order Hour and for her leadership on this critical issue.

Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago Congress passed the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA, because America rejected exclusion and finally recognized a simple truth: Every child,

regardless of ability, deserves to learn, grow, and succeed.

Yet, today, that promise is under attack. Disabled students are more vulnerable than ever, facing threats to their funding, their services, and the Federal protections that make equal education possible.

At the same time, this administration is laying off the very civil servants whose job it is to protect those children and enforce the law. When you cut special education funding, cut the Department of Education, and cut the staff, no one can speak out for the children who need these programs the most—children like my nephew RJ, who was born premature and has dealt with developmental delays all his life. His condition requires special care and attention. He didn't choose to be disabled or to have additional needs, but he is made in God's image, and he deserves every opportunity to reach his full potential.

Because of programs established by IDEA, children like RJ can access the same educational assistance and support that other students enjoy. I think that is a good thing. I think that is what should make America America, but this White House disagrees.

The Trump administration believes that the rights and opportunities available to students like RJ can and should be limited. They have spun abandoning programs as efficiency and told us that they are cutting waste and saving you money.

What it really is and what it really costs is paid for by underserved students and their families, because without the protections and funding provided by IDEA, more students are left behind. Without federally supported services that help with early detection, children are less able to navigate a world that wasn't built for them.

IDEA doesn't provide special treatment. It provides children with fair and inclusive treatment, and it doesn't waste Federal resources. It breaks through the barriers that children with disabilities face and levels the playing field.

Today, that lifeline for children with disabilities is under threat. In my own State, nearly one in five students have disabilities. That is more than a quarter million children in Ohio who rely on IDEA programs to get the education they need and deserve.

I have one question today: How exactly does gutting special education programs and staffing make America great? It doesn't. We should be strengthening IDEA, not weakening it. We should be protecting civil rights, not gutting them. We should be recommitting our promise to every child, not pulling out the rug.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, a true champion in the education space, for the leadership she has demonstrated on this critical and, yes, personal issue to me.

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative BROWN. I think she

knows I will always fight for RJ and all the kids like him.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Arizona and the newest member of our committee, Representative GRIJALVA.

Mrs. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman HAYES for her leadership and advocacy.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in defense of one of the most important civil rights laws Congress has ever passed, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and to oppose the dangerous and unlawful efforts to dismantle the Department of Education.

IDEA is not a suggestion. It is not discretionary. It is the law of the land, and for more than four decades, it has represented a bipartisan commitment that children with disabilities have the right to a free, appropriate public education, one that meets their individual needs and recognizes their full potential.

Before IDEA, millions of children with disabilities were excluded from classrooms, denied services, or told they did not belong in public school at all. IDEA changed that. It affirmed that a disability does not diminish a child's worth and that access to education is a civil right, not a privilege reserved for a few.

Today, more than 7 million students across the country rely on IDEA for individualized education plans, services, and due process protections. These are real students whose ability to learn, communicate, and thrive depends on fulfilling the promises made in Federal law.

Those promises are enforced, overseen, and protected by the Department of Education.

The Department plays an essential role in ensuring that IDEA is implemented fairly and consistently across all States. It provides guidance, oversight, enforcement, and accountability. Without it, IDEA becomes words on paper with no meaningful guarantee.

Let us be clear. People cannot claim to support students with disabilities while dismantling the very agency responsible for protecting their rights. Efforts to hollow out or get rid of the Department of Education without congressional authorization are not only reckless, they are illegal. Congress created IDEA. Congress assigned its enforcement. Attempting to undermine that structure violates the law and the Constitution's separation of powers.

Without Federal oversight, enforcement of IDEA will vary widely from State to State. A child's access to services will depend on their ZIP Code. Families will face confusion, delays, and costly legal battles just to secure what the law already guarantees their children. States and school districts will be left without clear guidance or support, increasing litigation, and diverting resources away from classrooms. Families, especially those without financial or legal resources, will pay the highest price.

The measure of our commitment to public education is how the students who need us the most are treated, and today, those students are watching.

I urge my colleagues to reject the efforts to weaken IDEA or dismantle the Department of Education. Congress has a legal obligation, a moral responsibility, and a constitutional duty to protect students with disabilities and ensure they receive the education they deserve.

I will continue to stand with students, families, educators, and advocates, and I call on this body to do the same.

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California, another member of the Committee on Education and Workforce, Representative TAKANO.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, it is always an honor and a pleasure to work with the gentlewoman from Connecticut, a distinguished National Teacher of the Year and an amazing educator who, like myself, went from the classroom to the Halls of Congress to advocate for our students nationally.

The promise of a free and quality education is a vital part of the American Dream. The embodiment of that promise came in 1975 when Congress passed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to ensure that children with disabilities could receive a free, fair, and equal education.

This landmark legislation changed the lives of millions of Americans. The disabled children's right to an education would not only be recognized, but it would be funded and enforced nationwide.

Today, 7.5 million students rely on IDEA funding, and that is nearly one in seven students whose specialized education is funded in part by the Department of Education.

Every school district in the country has families that have benefited from the IDEA, and its 50 years of enactment have improved public education for all students. That is why the Trump administration's actions to gut staffing at the Department of Education and move the Office of Special Education programs to the Department of Health and Human Services is so devastating. HHS does not have the structure, nor the staff, to administer the \$15 billion a year that this office is responsible for.

The administration also gutted the Office of Civil Rights, which is responsible for investigating civil rights abuses in schools. The OCR was responsible for ensuring that students with disabilities got the quality education they are entitled to and that cases of neglect and abuse were duly prosecuted.

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With the Department of Education fragmented, teachers and administrators won't be able to access the resources they need; parents will be unable to get the proper support; and the

students will be the ones who pay the price.

What is clear is that the Department of Education is the only Department equipped to be charged with the education of all students, including students with disabilities, not HHS, not the Department of Labor, not the Department of Justice.

Creating more hoops for schools to jump through and shattering known systems and protocol will, at the end of the day, hurt the students this administration claims they are protecting.

Republicans have not allowed IDEA to be fully funded. Republicans are looking to defund public schools, leaving parents with fewer choices and options in educating their children. Republicans' obsession with dismantling the Department of Education appears to be the only education policy they really have.

Our students need more. Our teachers deserve more. Our schools require more to fulfill the American promise of a free and quality education for every American child.

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say as a teacher, when students with disabilities enter public schools, they can't be turned away. You have to figure out what their needs are. You have to meet with parents and the team to come up with a plan and teach those students.

Unlike charter schools, for-profit schools, or even some private schools, which can decide that a student doesn't belong in their environment, at public schools, all kids belong there. We just have to figure out how to teach them.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE).

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Connecticut for yielding. It is so good to be here with her.

I want to focus a little bit on the importance of bringing this to the floor and perhaps even entering into a sort of dialogue with Mrs. HAYES about it.

I am thinking that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act came around 50 years ago. Long before that time, people recognized that education was a game changer for anyone.

Frederick Douglass said that knowledge is the "pathway from slavery to freedom," and, "Once you learn to read, you will be forever free."

We found that *Brown v. Board of Education* really challenged the Equal Protection Clause under the 14th Amendment and made sure that little Black children would be able to get an education. Even before the Department of Education was established, even before that, the IDEA was written into law.

I bring all of that background up to say that the Department of Education was critical because when you think of all the various laws that need to be administered to make sure that there is equal protection, the IDEA just being one of those laws, it is very disturbing to see that the Department of Edu-

cation has been stripped down to its bare bones.

I would like the member of the Committee on Education and Workforce to help me walk through it.

Am I right about this, that the administration has tried to illegally move the IDEA office and funding from the Department of Education to the Department of Health and Human Services?

I yield to the gentlewoman for a colloquy.

Mrs. HAYES. It has been floated, but we haven't seen any concrete plans, which is part of the problem.

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. In the middle of the shutdown, was it true that the Trump administration tried to fire nearly everyone in the Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services?

Mrs. HAYES. Yes. Many employees were RIF'd at the Department of Education. I think even more concerning is the Office of Civil Rights in the Department of Education, the number of staff who were fired.

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. The Office of Civil Rights was put in there through the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This office is responsible for investigating thousands of allegations of discrimination each year, which includes enforcing Federal laws, ensuring equal educational access, and preventing discrimination.

Gentlewoman from Connecticut, am I wrong about this? I think it is very important because what we have seen is that so-called disabled people or differently abled people have made such tremendous contributions to our culture and to our society. I am thinking of very famous people like Thomas Edison, Franklin Roosevelt, and Fannie Lou Hamer, people who have had polio, who have been in wheelchairs, and physicists who have contributed.

It is important to leave nobody behind because the education of everybody is important to our national security interests and our economic interests.

I am so happy that Mrs. HAYES has raised this in this Special Order hour, and I thank her for allowing me to participate.

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her remarks.

I will say that I am uniquely positioned to speak about some of the things that were brought up about what happened to children before IDEA was passed.

Before becoming a teacher, and, actually, while I was a teacher, I worked at the Southbury Training School in Connecticut, which is a facility, an institution, that was established in the 1930s for children with developmental and mental disabilities.

Many of those people, who are now adults, became institutionalized because they were placed in this facility. With their disabilities, had a law like this been in place, they could have been able to thrive and live in their

community, but we put them behind walls in institutions. We can never go back to a time when that happens again.

I thank Ms. MOORE for joining us tonight.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. MCIVER).

Mrs. MCIVER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. HAYES) so much for leading this Special Order hour.

Mr. Speaker, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Department of Education are vital to all communities, including the one I represent.

Nearly one in five students in New Jersey is served under IDEA. Without this support, almost a quarter-million students would be denied an adequate education.

My district, New Jersey's 10th Congressional District, receives \$98 million in title I and special education grants. How will our schools support these students without these funds?

As a former education administrator, I know firsthand the impact IDEA funding makes on students who need it the most. Without Federal funding, States and local communities would have to cover the costs, but your ZIP Code should not determine if you deserve to have your children's educational needs met.

As a public school mom, this is deeply personal for me. People in my community and communities across the Nation are scared.

My office recently received a letter from Alexander, a special education and social studies teacher in my district. Alexander is worried about what funding cuts would mean for his students, who are among the most vulnerable and underserved.

Too often, the most vulnerable among us are forced to suffer from bad policy decisions. In this country, the richest one, we are supposed to find solutions for those who need our support, not leave them behind.

This administration came to office saying it was going to put Americans first. These attacks on public education show they are putting children last.

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. KENNEDY).

Mr. KENNEDY of New York. Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me thank Representative HAYES for her leadership in hosting this Special Order hour.

This past November, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, an incredible milestone that serves as a reminder of the promise we make to our Nation's children that every student, no matter who they are or how they learn, deserves equal access to a quality education.

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Yet, this anniversary comes at a time when the Trump administration

continues its systematic efforts to eliminate the Department of Education, gut the Office of Special Education Programs, and undermine IDEA, a landmark law that fundamentally changed how we educate children with disabilities.

Since 1975, IDEA has provided immeasurable support to children with disabilities, particularly for those in their earliest and most formative years. IDEA part C, a Federal program closely intertwined the Medicaid, provides early intervention from birth to age 3, oftentimes the difference between a child meeting developmental milestones or falling behind.

These Federal dollars change millions of lives across the country every single year. However, Trump and congressional Republicans have told American families that these investments don't matter, that their child's future does not count, and that Federal dollars are better spent elsewhere.

I am here to remind the American people that the President's shameless assault on early intervention and Medicaid paints a grim picture for the future of special education and for the future of millions of children.

As an occupational therapist myself, I have worked with children with developmental disabilities in their earliest years, and I have seen what happens when we make good on our promise to invest in special education and early intervention. Early intervention care alters the course of a child's life for the better, dramatically improves health and educational outcomes, and gives working families the support they desperately need.

Republicans in this body need to remember the sacred promise made to children with disabilities 50 years ago and stand by it rather than turn a blind eye. Democrats will not sit idly by as this administration jeopardizes our children's futures and undermines the fundamental right to an education.

These aren't budget cuts. These are broken promises to children with disabilities. We cannot build a stronger nation by cutting off critical support for those who need it most. We must fully fund and support the essential mission and fulfill the commitment of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. TLAIB), who is a champion for children.

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, I thank my sister in service, Congresswoman HAYES, who has been leading this fight to protect our children, especially making sure that we have access to public education and quality education for all of our children.

Alongside millions of children, including children with disabilities and their families, we are demanding that Congress fulfill its promise.

Nearly 50 years ago, Congress passed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, IDEA, with a commitment that every child, including students

with disabilities, meet their full potential in every classroom and to ensure also that every family has the services they need for their children to succeed.

We didn't say educate children with disabilities if it is convenient. We didn't say protect their rights unless the budgets are too tight or we don't have enough money. We made a promise. We made a promise to fund 40 percent of the cost of IDEA. That promise was never kept. The Federal share is now less than 12 percent.

According to the Autism Alliance of Michigan, Michigan ranks among the lowest in the Nation for special education outcomes, due to massive underfunding by our Federal Government. Students with disabilities in Michigan are twice as likely to drop out of school as their peers. Only 60 percent graduate high school in 4 years, compared to 85 percent among their other peers.

Right now, we are seeing special education under direct and deliberate attack. We have seen repeated efforts to slash education funding, weaken civil rights enforcement and chip away at the protections IDEA guarantees to our students with disabilities.

Every dollar we fail to invest in IDEA is a cost shifted onto our schools, our local communities, our families, and our children, who are already feeling financial strain.

Our families are counting on us. Congress cannot continue to fall short on our students and families regarding funding when so much is at stake. We must fulfill our promise and fund IDEA.

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SIMON), to speak on this very important issue.

Ms. SIMON. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman HAYES for bringing us here tonight.

Mr. Speaker, America, this country, has long promised that every child has a right to learn. That promise exists because parents, not just this Chamber, parents, refused to give up on their children's future.

Mr. Speaker, one of those parents was my mother, Vicki Simon. I was born with congenital blindness, and my mother in the early seventies was on the phone consistently, day after day to ensure that I entered a school that would be there for me, that would ensure that I had assistance and support, and that I would read large print with power.

I am thankful for teachers and educators, like the gentlewoman, who brought children like me in front of the board. I was so happy to cosponsor the See the Board Act. It should be in this Chamber, and we should be voting to ensure that while the Republicans take away healthcare from families and disabled children, those deaf and those blind, that they get education and screening at their schools of choice.

We are also here because advocates refused to be silent because Congress

recognized that an equal education is the foundation of any democratic society.

Before these protections, young people with disabilities around the country were not only silenced, they were institutionalized. Families were told to stay quiet while bright and brilliant minds were dismissed, and today that door is closing again, eerily quickly because of the Trump administration's reckless and cruel agenda.

Mr. Speaker, if you would ask any parent of a disabled child in this country regardless how they vote, red or blue, if you ask them if they knew that the Department of Education—yes, we want to trim it down—but the very department, the Office of Civil Rights, was all but being severed, and you let them know what the Office of Civil Rights did: The Office of Civil Rights in the Department of Education ensures that every rape on a college campus in this country is investigated. If the city decides not to investigate, then the Office of Civil Rights comes in.

The Office of Civil Rights investigates for the mother and the child who uses the wheelchair when the school says they don't need a ramp.

The Office of Civil Rights literally provides constant oversight over every school district in this country so that a child in Alabama has the same rights to an education as their disabled peer in California.

Let's make it clear: We are not talking about any progressive agenda here. We are talking about letting it be known in this country that the Trump administration is literally taking away investigators who will oversee the educational progress of disabled children.

Tens of thousands of families are waiting for justice and their cases to be investigated. These are not statistics; these are real families that we serve.

Did Congress ever intend this?

Did the administration ever intend to block away rights and responsibilities of folks who are supposed to oversee the rightful education of disabled children?

The American people will not accept this.

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Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from California and again thank her for cosponsoring that piece of legislation with me. I understand that if a child can't see the board, they can't learn. Her enthusiasm when I brought it to her is exactly why we need people from diverse perspectives in this Chamber.

I now yield to the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. TOKUDA). I thank her so much for the work that she does on behalf of children in her home State.

Ms. TOKUDA. Mr. Speaker, only 50 years ago, we made a promise as a nation. When Congress passed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, we affirmed a simple and profound truth: Every child, no matter their disability or ability, has the right to a

free and appropriate public education; not as charity, not as an afterthought, but as a civil right.

Let's be honest. That promise has never been self-executing. Making IDEA real has required vigorous Federal oversight, strong civil rights enforcement, litigation when necessary, strong parents who demand only the best for their child, and a willingness to demand more—not less—resources and accountability.

That is why the Trump administration's dismantling of the Department of Education, the decimation of special education enforcement, and the hollowing out of the Office for Civil Rights is so dangerous. This is not reform. This is retreat. It will set public education back more than 50 years.

In Hawaii, we know what happens when FAPE is treated as optional. The Felix Consent Decree raised the alarm more than 30 years ago that we were failing our children. We are the tenth largest school district in the Nation. One in ten of our students have an IEP. Many live on our neighbor islands in rural and remote communities, where even access to services or reliable internet is a challenge. Federal enforcement is not abstract to us. It is the difference between support and neglect.

The reality is, IDEA has also been an unfunded mandate. You have heard it here today from my colleagues. The Federal Government once promised to cover 40 percent of the cost. It has never met that promise, never rising above 10 or 12 percent at best. Now, instead of finally doing what we owe our children, our families, our communities, this administration wants to walk away altogether.

I am a proud product of our public schools. I am a proud parent of public school students, and I believe deeply that an injury to one is an injury and insult to all.

The dismantling, defunding, destaffing, restructuring of the Department of Education is death by a thousand cuts. If we allow this to continue, if we walk back all the gains we have made as a result of IDEA, it will leave all our children behind.

We must not, cannot let this happen, and I assure you, all of us here today on this floor will stand in the way of the destruction of the Department of Education and the demise of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I now yield to the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. STANSBURY), a fearless advocate for children and her constituents.

Ms. STANSBURY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today first in thanks to our fearless leader, Representative HAYES, today, but Mr. Speaker, I rise today to sound the alarm on what is happening at the U.S. Department of Education or at least what is left of it.

For millions of students with disabilities, the IDEA, or Individuals with

Disabilities Education Act, is a landmark civil rights law that guarantees a free and inclusive public education for all students.

However, under the Trump administration, IDEA is under attack, with the administration announcing at the height of the government shutdown in October that it would fire nearly all of the staff responsible for ensuring that students with disabilities have access to resources and support services.

Can you imagine? It is not just reckless, it is not just illegal. It is heartless, and it is disgusting.

Piled onto continuing cuts and threats to other programs of vulnerable families, the President and the GOP have continued to cut healthcare, education, food assistance, housing, and childcare to millions of American families, attacking the very families who need it most while giving billionaires tax breaks on the backs of hard-working Americans. It is shameful.

Mr. Speaker, I want to address the administration's attacks on education and what these actions mean for all students, but especially students with disabilities, their educators, and their families. The Department of Education exists to ensure that every student has access to opportunity, to protect their civil rights, to ensure that every student has a fair shot at success.

However, since day one, this administration has systematically dismantled the department, with budget cuts, cutting programs, delaying grants, and firing staff. Over the course of the last year, my office has heard from hundreds of parents, teachers, and students who are scared about what is happening and wondering what will come next: from teachers and counselors who are stretched thin and uncertain about whether or not resources will be there next year, from schools who don't know if their funding will be cut, and from young people, the very children that these programs serve, who are afraid because this administration is terrorizing the children of this country by attacking education and schools and their families, attacking the most vulnerable families.

I have to say this, Mr. Speaker, there is no demand for this. There is no one out there in the American public who is demanding that we cut programs for students and young people with disabilities because it is cruel, wrong, and illegal. It must stop.

That is why Democrats are standing here tonight: to stand up for our students, to stand up for our young people, to fight back against these attacks, and to take a stand against the dismantling of these vital programs.

Let me just say this: In New Mexico, we understand that our young people are our future. That is why we are the first State in the Nation to pass universal free childcare and education for every single student in our State.

I, for one, as a public school kid, was deeply proud to carry the Federal enabling legislation. It is why I fought for

funding to build new schools at To'hajiilee, Sandia Pueblo, and Mescalero Apache. It is why I am carrying legislation to increase teacher pay, to protect BIE in Tribal schools, to create a postsecondary pathway of success for students with disabilities, veterans, and first-generation students. It is why I have supported New Mexico also becoming the first State in the country to guarantee free trade school and free college for every single New Mexican. That is how you should be transforming education, that is how you deliver for communities, and that is how you care for the children that we have been blessed to take care of in our role and prepare the next generation of leaders.

I will say this to Mr. Trump: While he and his colleagues may not believe in the power of public education or civil rights or the need to protect children—because their actions speak as loud as their words—we do. We believe in investing in education from early childhood education to higher education, and everything in between, and we will continue to use every tool at our disposal to fight back at every turn and honor our commitment to the students of this country. I, for one, and all of us will not stand by and allow this to happen.

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from New Mexico and all my colleagues who showed up tonight. I really thought I would be standing here for an hour reading emails from my constituents and telling the stories of the hundreds of students with disabilities that I have taught in my classroom, telling the stories of how we met them where they were and made accommodations so that they could thrive and really learn.

I can't express to you what it feels like as a teacher when you have a student who is struggling or has a disability and you see the moment where they get it, the moment where the lesson breaks through and they are receiving the information in the same way as the other students in the classroom.

I want to make sure that those students can continue to be educated alongside their nondisabled peers and not put in a basement or behind a wall at an institution. I also want to make sure that even if a child doesn't have a strong parent advocate or a strong family at home that they, too, will have people in their public schools fighting for them, that they, too, will still have the services that they need and deserve.

The Secretary of Education has often said that her final mission is to close the Department. I would like to put her and everyone else on notice that I, too, am on a mission, on a mission to make sure that not only the kids that were in my classroom and in my State of Connecticut, but kids all across the country know that they have the right to a high-quality public education, know that it is our responsibility to

make sure that they thrive and are prepared for life and being self-sufficient.

Again, I thank all of my colleagues for showing up tonight, and I will continue to fight not only for these children and these families, but for all of the educators who stand in front of them and pour their heart out so that they can meet their needs.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

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ICE UNDER ATTACK

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Mr. ROY of Texas was recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from South Carolina (Mrs. BIGGS).

RECOGNIZING THE SOUTH CAROLINA NATIONAL GUARD

Mrs. BIGGS of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and thank the brave men and women of the South Carolina National Guard who are currently deployed here in Washington, D.C.

I have been fortunate to spend time with these young men and women on several occasions during their mission. I have shared a meal with the guardsmen. I visited as they prepared for patrol. I have seen them in action while on duty.

I also thank the families, spouses, and loved ones back home who carry the weight while their Guard members serve here in D.C. The families' sacrifice and strength are a vital part of a successful mission. Their dedication reflects the values we hold dear in South Carolina. I am grateful to Governor McMaster for standing firmly behind them on this important mission.

Mr. Speaker, in the coming days, I will be introducing legislation to ensure our guardsmen are better protected and supported, both during deployments like this and beyond.

God bless our military. South Carolina stands with you, and so do I.

SUICIDE IS AT CRISIS LEVELS IN THE COUNTRY

Mrs. BIGGS of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, suicide is at crisis levels in the country, and this year it is hitting heartbreaking highs in my own district.

As a psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner, I have met with families in the hardest moments of their lives, and I have seen what happens when the system fails to connect with someone in a crisis to get the help that they may need.

That is why I have introduced the Hope Heals Act. When an individual is in crisis, they don't need a maze of red tape. They need intervention, a professional to see them, to listen, and to act.

My bill is about making sure families don't get left in the dark. It is about

giving communities better tools to recognize when something is wrong and the confidence to respond before it is too late.

No one should have to fight the system to save a life. The Hope Heals Act is about honoring the God-given value of every life and making sure help is there when it is needed most.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in this mission.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from South Carolina, particularly for her shout-out to the National Guard from her own State that has been deployed to the District of Columbia.

Unfortunately, that has been necessary, and I am proud of the President for trying to make sure that we secure the Nation's Capital. They are one of the many National Guard units that have been deployed to do the job that the people of D.C. should be doing if they were competent and if they were doing what they are supposed to do as the Nation's Capital. The President is taking charge, and he is leading to ensure that our Nation's Capital is safe for the American people to come visit.

I will note that, relatedly, when we are talking about the state of law enforcement and the state of the security of the American people, we have heard a lot of criticisms from my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, both in the House and Senate and generally around the country, directed at the great men and women of ICE, the law enforcement agency that is dedicated to the task of removing illegal aliens and, in particular, dangerous illegal aliens from the streets of the United States of America according to the law.

They are particularly focusing on and targeting those individuals—I believe the number is around 1.5 million people who are currently in the United States under orders of removal. That is, they have gone through the process. Judges in this country have ordered the removal of 1.5 million people, and ICE is tasked with removing them. Hundreds of thousands of them are dangerous individuals who have committed crimes in their home countries, who are trafficking narcotics, and who have been engaging in criminal behavior in the United States of America.

What do my Democratic colleagues do? They stand up in defense of criminals, of criminal illegal aliens, and are in constant attack on the men and women of ICE.

Let's just go through some recent criticisms of the great men and women who are working for ICE:

Minnesota Governor Tim Walz smeared ICE officers as a "threat" to the public, called ICE reckless, suggested the State is at war with Federal officers and under attack by ICE, and smeared ICE as the "modern-day Gestapo."

California Governor Gavin Newsom likened ICE to "secret police," calling them authoritarian, and calling on the people to push back.

Illinois Governor JB Pritzker claimed ICE is turning the country into Nazi Germany.

New York Governor Kathy Hochul accused ICE of "terrorizing people."

Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro claimed ICE officers "make our neighborhoods less safe."

Minnesota Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan said ICE officers caused "chaos and terror."

Senator CHUCK SCHUMER declared that ICE does not belong in our neighborhoods.

Senator TINA SMITH called ICE "a clear and present threat."

Senator JOHN HICKENLOOPER smeared ICE as a "reign of terror."

Senator JEFF MERKLEY likened ICE operations to "fascism" and claimed officers are doing nothing but "terrorizing our communities."

Senator BERNIE SANDERS asked people to "stop ICE from what they are doing as soon as possible."

Senator ELIZABETH WARREN claimed ICE is "intentionally stoking fear and tearing communities apart."

Senator RUBEN GALLEGOS said ICE exists "to scare the American public."

Senator MARK WARNER equated ICE officers to a brutal dictator.

Senator DICK BLUMENTHAL accused ICE of spreading "lawlessness and recklessness."

Senator ALEX PADILLA accused ICE of "indiscriminate violence."

Senator DICK DURBIN accused ICE's officers of committing "atrocities."

Representative ILHAN OMAR said ICE is "state violence," called officers "vile and beyond cruel," and stated "abolishing ICE is not enough."

Representative PRAMILA JAYAPAL called ICE officers "deranged," accused them of "kidnapping," said "resistance" to ICE is "inspiring," and claimed ICE officers will "shoot at you and kill you."

Representative ERIC SWALWELL smeared ICE officers as "masked thugs," called them "terrorizing bandit[s]," said it was his "priority" to ensure officers are "no longer faceless," compared them to the KGB, and demanded they "stay the f— out of California."

Representative JASMINE CROCKETT compared ICE to "slave patrols" and called them thugs.

Representative DELIA RAMIREZ said DHS "is the single biggest threat to public safety right now." I will repeat: She said DHS "is the single biggest threat to public safety right now" and attacked ICE as a "terror force."

Representative SUMMER LEE said ICE is "out of control" and "a police state."

Representative AYANNA PRESSLEY called ICE "a rogue, violent agency" that "has no business in our communities" and "must be abolished," and accused ICE of "terrorizing our communities."

Representative APRIL MCCLAIN DELANEY called ICE "lawless."

Representative ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ called ICE "an anticivilian